



Governor's Mansion

800 RICHLAND STREET
COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA 29201

In recent years, obesity has grown into one of the most critical health issues in South Carolina. Currently, over 60 percent of all adults are either overweight or obese, and almost one-quarter of youth and one-quarter of 2 to 5-year-old children are overweight or risk becoming overweight. Obesity can lead to a host of health problems, such as heart disease, diabetes, depression, and certain types of cancer and arthritis, and puts great strain on the public and private health care systems. In fact, South Carolina spent almost \$1 billion on obesity-related medical expenses in 2003 alone. Fortunately, many of the health conditions associated with overweight and obesity are largely preventable and can be diminished significantly with an effective plan.

In an effort to alleviate the burden of obesity in our state, the South Carolina Coalition for Obesity Prevention Efforts (SCCOPE) developed a strategic plan for improving nutrition and increasing physical activity – ***Moving South Carolina Towards a Healthy Weight: Promoting Healthy Lifestyles and Healthy Communities.*** This plan offers a framework that can be used by the full spectrum of South Carolinians, from corporate boardrooms, policy-makers and rural churches, to medical centers and child care providers to aid in the reduction of chronic diseases and conditions associated with obesity.

Together with the Department of Health and Environmental Control, Mark and I recently kicked off the *Healthy South Carolina Challenge* designed to motivate South Carolinians choose a healthier, more active lifestyle. Much like the Challenge, ***Moving South Carolina Towards a Healthy Weight*** promotes a healthier South Carolina by targeting the areas of overweight and obesity. I urge all South Carolinians to review ***Moving South Carolina Towards a Healthy Weight*** and decide what you, your family, worksite, school, or community can do to address overweight and obesity and ultimately improve our overall health and well-being.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Jenny Sanford".

Jenny Sanford
First Lady

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May, 2005

To the Citizens of South Carolina:

Obesity has become a critical public health problem in both the United States and South Carolina. Obesity is a serious public health threat that manifests itself in numerous chronic conditions such as heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure and diabetes. Health issues related to obesity have a substantial negative impact on life expectancy, quality of life and the economy in South Carolina. The U.S. Surgeon General recently reported that obesity was the single greatest threat to the United States costing U.S. taxpayers \$117 billion per year in direct health care costs and indirect costs such as lost wages.

There is an urgent need for action and we are pleased that South Carolina has accepted the challenge with the launch of a strategic framework for obesity – ***Moving South Carolina Towards a Healthy Weight: Promoting Healthy Lifestyles and Healthy Communities.*** Realizing the importance of a coordinated effort to impact the problem of obesity in the state, DHEC applied for and received funding from CDC in 2003 to establish a physical activity and nutrition program to prevent and control obesity. The Division of Obesity Prevention and Control (DOPC) coordinated a partnership, the South Carolina Coalition for Obesity Prevention Efforts (SCCOPE), to work together to create a blueprint outlining promising activities for preventing overweight and obesity. The group consisted of a broad range of stakeholders from key sectors all working towards a goal of educating public awareness on the health issues related to obesity and recommending policy and environmental approaches as well as highlighting activities and programs to better the health of all the citizens of the state.

The most current and effective obesity prevention and management programs must be made available and accessible to all South Carolinians – especially those who are at greatest risk. It is our hope that this strategic framework for action will precipitate a movement in SC that encourages families and individuals to eat healthier and be more active; that helps worksites to identify the numerous benefits of healthy employees; and that results in sustainable capacity to help make the 'healthiest choice the easiest choice.' It will require hard work, patience and persistence – but we are very confident that it can be done! Our efforts together can help improve citizens' quality of life, reduce the impact from other related chronic diseases, and also have a positive effect of the financial burden in our state.

Sincerely,

C. Earl Hunter, MA
Commissioner

Lisa F. Waddell, MD, MPH
Deputy Commissioner for Health Services

State of South Carolina

Governor's Proclamation

WHEREAS, obesity is a complex condition, influenced by behavioral, environmental and biological factors, that increases the risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, some forms of cancer, and other chronic diseases; and

WHEREAS, more than sixty percent of the adults in the Palmetto State are overweight, with approximately twenty-five percent considered obese, and approximately one quarter of our low-income children aged 2 - 5 and high school students are overweight or at risk of overweight; and

WHEREAS, obesity places a large economic burden on our state, having expenses over one billion dollars in 2003, nearly half of which were paid by taxpayers through Medicare and Medicaid; and

WHEREAS, wide-scale, population-based efforts to enhance proper nutrition, physical activity, and other healthy behaviors positively impact obesity, improving the quality of life of the residents of the Palmetto State.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Mark Sanford, Governor of the Great State of South Carolina, do hereby proclaim June 2005 as

OBESITY AWARENESS MONTH

throughout the state and encourage all South Carolinians to join in obesity prevention efforts where they live, work, and play and to make healthier decisions in their day-to-day lives.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Sanford".

MARK SANFORD
GOVERNOR
STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA